



2007

Meredith, Larry Oral History Interview

George Blum

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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Meredith, Lawrence (1966-1999)
Dean of the Chapel, Callison College, Religious Studies, Humanities.

August 9, 2007

By George Blum
(edited July 2009)

Transcribed by Erin Hendrickson, University Archives

Subjects: Innovations in the Chapel program, attitude toward University administrators, Robert Burns, Stanley McCaffery, Donald DeRosa, role of Academic Vice President John Bevan, Alistair McCrone, Clifford Hand, notable University faculty, involvement in curriculum changes at Callison College, innovative courses at the University, University community relations.

**UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
MEREDITH (LARRY), PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS
STUDIES**

August 9, 2007

TAPE 1, Side A

BLUM: This is another interview. We are in the series of Emeriti interviews and today we are the Holt Atherton department of Special Collections. The date is August 9, 2007, a balmy day and so we are ready to proceed. This is George Blum. I am a professor of History Emeritus and the interviewee is Larry Meredith—long time professor of religious studies.

MEREDITH: And the [balmy?] guest!

BLUM: [chuckles] Well, let me ask you first of all Larry, what brought you here to Pacific?

MEREDITH: Bob Burns, the president, brought me here. I had given a series of lectures at a national youth conference in Lincoln, Nebraska on “Ethics and Contemporary Students” and Larry Jackson [the provost of Callison, the newest cluster college at Pacific and former Dean of the Chapel] and Wes Brown [the director of the Methodist Student Movement program here] heard me there. They told Burns, Burns got interested, and wanted me to come out here. He said that he had revolutionary situation, that something very special was happening in California, and he wanted me to be a part of it. So we considered and decided to come and be Californians.

BLUM: Well, you came here and you really served over the years in several capacities. You came in 1966 and retired in 1999. At the same time however, you served in different positions. Can you just briefly outline?

MEREDITH: Sure. I came—I had a double position really. The Dean of the Chapel was the main position from which I ran the chapel program, but also I was appointed professor in the religious studies department and taught Bible, which was required of every student who came into the College of Pacific ----so there were just hundreds and hundreds of students in the Bible courses. I taught Old Testament in the fall and New Testament in the spring, so I had that responsibility, plus I was on the charter faculty of what was going to be Callison College. I was part of that core group which selected faculty and that college was due to open the following year in 1967. So that was the way we began the time here.

BLUM: And so let's see—you eventually just switched to a teaching position?

MEREDITH: Yes I did. After four years in the chapel—we really ought to talk about that today because those were fairly signature years—I left that post and became a full time professor of humanities at Callison College. They had no one that was full time faculty in the religion area so I moved there—although in the clusters, as you well know because you were charter at Raymond, we weren't really suppose to emphasize our specialty. Part of our innovation was an almost forced interdisciplinary atmosphere. We were constantly mixed in with all other disciplines, and it wasn't as if we were in some hermetically sealed department --- where we saw only historians or people in theology. So that's what it was in the cluster. But for the first four years in the chapel, that was even more far ranging than interdisciplinary. Burns knew what was going on when I was Dean of Chapel at Albion College in Michigan because I had begun a concept about chapels that probably—as far as I know-- was unique. I felt that the chapel ought to be the center of the campus. That all of the curricular ideas ought to be reflected in what we did there, the contact with the culture, the quest for meaning, and the celebration

of life: all of these things should happen in the chapel. So it wasn't a matter of being sort of a church transplanted to the campus; it was a way of celebrating and deepening the whole campus agenda--what the college was to be. And this was so successful at Albion that it was noted by the Wall Street Journal—the editor interviewed me about what was going on Albion College and reported this program. on the front page. So we brought the same idea here and implemented it. We tied the chapel into the curriculum at every point. We even introduced a class synchronized with the chapel program called “Religion and Modern Culture.” It began as an experimental class in my second year with twenty-five students, and then it increased quickly—we had at one point almost two hundred and fifty students in the class with a number of religious study faculty members involved. It was just an incredible way to enter into the collegiate culture, a real challenge for students and faculty. Burns liked it. [He loved action!] A lot of people didn't—[laughter] That's the way it was. They all—some people-- wondered where their chapel went. What are all these strange people doing in our safe little college talking to the students?--

BLUM: We all—since we are on that topic, could you perhaps just mention some of the rather interesting persons that you said you brought to the campus during that time because I know at that time it was quite an enlivening experience.

MEREDITH: Well, yes—sometimes. I guess the most outrageous happened the first year. It was an invitation to Timothy Leary to speak in the chapel. He had just formed what was called the League for Spiritual Discovery, something like that, which was of course alluding to LSD. I mean the acrostic on the initials.—Well he seemed to be quite serious about it. He wrote a book entitled High Priest and he compared the drug experience to the Eucharist—a kind of sixties' Holy Communion—this was the

new consciousness way to really feel the spirit. It was so successful for Leary. He had been a professor-- an auxiliary professor-- at Harvard and they had a scientific program set up—really an experiment between the chapel and the Divinity school comparing the experience communicants had taking an ordinary communion and those who would take LSD. As a matter of fact, one of the professors at Raymond College at Pacific was part of that experiment and here he always soft peddled that experience. He never announced publicly that he was in on that—experiment.

BLUM: It must have been Gene Rice.

MEREDITH: It was Gene Rice and—they still have on file at Harvard the PhD dissertation on the basis of those experiments. Well I thought, here we are, this is a national icon on the “Summer of Love” and all of the things that are going on, sure let’s have Timothy Leary in here. And we did. It was—some people never got over that. You couldn’t get near the chapel that day, by the way. At least five hundred crammed in it. It only holds three hundred and they were all outside and milling around—checking the scene. It was just an incredible kind of experience and letters to the Stockton Record editor followed it for a month—more than a month--- and I remember the Dean of Men standing with me outside the chapel. Leary said he would be here at 11 o’clock, he’s coming from San Francisco and I was out in front at seven minutes until 11 o’clock and there were people all over the place and no Leary. And the Dean of Men looked at me and said “what, you don’t have a guest?” and I said well “not yet, I’m sure he’ll be here. He is so nice.” At first Leary asked for a thousand dollars for a guest engagement, but when I told him about our situation [\$50 per week for honorarium] he said “I won’t take anything, it’s okay.” And then the dean looked at me and said “well if he’d be good for a thousand dollars, I’m sure he’d be good for nothing.” [laughs]. And then he walked off and left me there. And as soon as the good for nothing showed up—it was—and by the way since

I was a little bit off the regular chapel schedule—I wasn't sure the College of Pacific would actually let me do this and so I asked the provost of Raymond College "would you sort of sponsor this?" He said "oh yes, we'll sponsor that." [laughs]. Anyway, it all worked out. Burns supported my programs and actually we had a probing discussion over the period of time on what was the nature of academic freedom and how it related to the concept of freedom in the Christian faith. So, that was the kind of provocative chapel I mean. We had others not so radical. More warmth was generated when Charles Schulz came to the chapel. The book The Gospel According to Peanuts had just come out a year before and I had known the author of the book [Robert Short]. We had gone to school together at SMU and he had actually dated the woman that became my wife. That's how well I knew him. So, anyway I got it touch with Bob and Charles Schulz and the both came to chapel on the same day. We showed portions of the slides that were in the book The Gospel According to Peanuts and Schulz responded with an evaluation of Short's book and his own religious beliefs. It was just a marvelous morning—and then they both went to class [Religion and Modern Culture] in the afternoon. Schulz was there with the students for a couple of hours drawing pictures and talking about his own view on theology and so forth. And that's what we ended up doing with all our guests. Nobody came and just went. There was no such thing as a speaker who simply showed up and left. They spoke in the chapel, they had lunch with us, they also then had to go that afternoon into class for at least two hours with students. So there was plenty of time to talk with them ----and the students were required to read some of their materials before they came.

BLUM: Did you bring in any political personalities? Angela Davis?

MEREDITH: We did—Angela well, I didn't bring her in as a political personality. It was the black liberation movement. Now

of course that was political and the things that were going on in Berkeley were political. So Angela did come out here and she spoke in chapel----- and the black community was out in force. And again she stayed for the two hour afternoon class with our students. It was really a very educational experience for them and especially, I must say, for me. On the morning she spoke, she called me from the downtown bus station. She had come in from Berkeley and she was trying to rent a car to come out here and make other stops. She wanted to rent a car just to be in the area for some reason and they wouldn't rent her a car. I had to go downtown and vouch for her—just some of the education that went with the radical sixties. She was a political personality in that sense. So we had that dimension, but we also had innovative esthetics. We had Edgar Summerlin for example. He was one of the great artists in jazz music. He came out and performed in the chapel. We had Tina Burnell, who was a ballerina from the San Francisco ballet. Tina became a nun and would not dance anymore except in a chapel or sacred sanctuary. And it was an ethereal performance and her later discussion with the class of the relation of studies with the spiritual life was the very essence of the meaning of college. So it was in 1966-67 and so it continued over four years.

BLUM: Well, perhaps we can switch a little bit to what your impression was first of all at the start and then the following years, particularly when you were associate with the chapel of students.
| Start with maybe how you got along with faculty, staff—I

MEREDITH: Well, my association it's—I have to kind of sift through that. The school had an enforced curriculum when I came --I eluded to this—in the College of the Pacific every student had to take Bible and if you forced that on every student you are going to get a strange lack of enthusiasm for the material. And the other thing was we were running the chapel simultaneously with those protests about the war in Vietnam, which was virtually civil war in

the United States, and if you stayed in college you did not have to go to Vietnam. So there were a lot of different reasons to be in the Bible course. Most of them unrelated to education. So there was one dimension. The cluster students were another—Callison began in my second year and I was a part of that all the time from the beginning and was part of the faculty group that went to India to visit the campus. In fact I was in Bangalore when the Charter class arrived at the Indian campus. There was a historian that you knew-- Weldon Crowley-- who was at that time one of the most respected and well-liked teacher on campus. When I came he was very, very popular and he became the first Director of the overseas campus. So, I got to see that cluster mentality. That was a very different kind of student. In fact almost totally different then anything we had at the College of Pacific. They were so excited about the adventure they were beginning—to them college was the adventure of a lifetime because in the Callison curriculum that we setup, they came in as freshman men and women and then everybody in the entire sophomore class was required to study in India for a year. And we set up a campus over there in Bangalore and you can imagine the excitement that they all had. But it was also a difficult year and when they came back it required more resources then we had at the time to deal with all of the insights and problems that might have developed in their term there. So there was that. There was the excitement and the imagination of the cluster students and then the COP students at a different temperature really. I found—I thought that the Albion College experience in Michigan was a little more hot house liberal arts then I found here and that—well it is my impression that that's why Raymond, the first cluster, was founded--- because of the liberal arts curriculum. The COP curriculum did not have the kind of—I hate to use the word--- rigor. But Dr. Burns, the president, was willing to use that word. He told me and he told everybody who would listen, which were a lot people, that the College of Pacific was out of the running as far as academics went. And he wanted to revolutionize and so he started the clusters which were

modeled after Oxford and Cambridge in order to then get the tension between horizons of excellence going on the campus--- specifically because of Raymond's challenge. There was also Covell --quite another matter-- where everything was taught in Spanish. That was second cluster that opened up. That was so exciting that Time Magazine picked it up, there was full page in Time Magazine in 1963 about the opening of the Covell. Said it was the first all Spanish speaking college that wasn't located in Latin America or Mexico, but in the United States. So we had that innovation and then this International dimension at Callison and it really was an incredibly exciting time for all. As I said, Albion was really very well respected, very well grounded in the liberal arts and Raymond was to provide that kind of excellence here. I use to call it hardcore liberal arts [laughs]--- it was just that --- down and dirty non-specialization. I mean you couldn't even take electives. You had to take calculus, you had to take history, religion, sociology, you name it -- you study it By the time you got to the end of Raymond requirements in the classical sense you were really educated and you'd be ready for graduate record exams--- and Raymond led the county in those graduate record exam scores---

BLUM: Yes. In the general education part.

MEREDITH: --Yeah in the general education. So all of this was going on here, plus the student revolution in the country and all over the world college is closing and student battles in Paris and Tokyo. All of these things were happening on the campus. By the way one of those revolutionaries--while I'm thinking of them--- was Tina Aptheker, she was the one --along with Mario Savio-- who led the student revolution at Berkeley. Her father was the leading communist intellectual in the United States. So she came here as guest of the Religious Studies department and we had, along with her, the Steve Miller Blues Band from San Francisco to perform. Well, we can't put all the people who want to see

this in the chapel so we put it in the conservatory--- and we had fifteen hundred people showed up. They were spilling all over everything and when Tina Apthecker stood up and looked around she said she was absolutely astounded that there was this kind of awareness and interest out here in Stockton. You know, in San Francisco they use to think that you had to have a passport to go to Stockton. I mean it was like—where? And all of this kind of thing was happening. In fact, when Timothy Leary was here we made the Rolling Stone Magazine, and the other magazine that everyone read back then which opened with this line: “Where was Timothy Leary? He was out in some nowhere place like Stockton, talking to little old ladies in drip-dry dresses.” The radicals just could not believe that this was the hippiest place on Earth at this time. Everything that was going in the national student movement was represented here. I know that Jack Bevan came in here from being the Dean of International College in Florida, yeah they changed the name—somebody gave him a lot of money [talking together, hard to understand] Anyway he came in here, accepted Burns’ offer to become Academic Dean, and he just without condition that he knew as much about what was going in education as anyone in the country. And as someone with national authority he said that Pacific was potentially the most exciting campus in the country. That’s where we were.

BLUM: Well he came and stayed for only three years—

MEREDITH: He just stayed three years [laughs]

BLUM: Well, he did introduce a major curricular change—

MEREDITH: Yes he did.

BLUM: --He left a certain legacy in retrospect.

MEREDITH: Yes. He did want the curricular change and we did get the Interdiscipline and Imagination program---so-called I and I

BLUM: --And then spawned the I and I program so that the courses fit in the UOP curriculum.

MEREDITH: Yes. It's true.

BLUM: And among other things, also introduced the four-one-four calendar—

MEREDITH: Now that was brought in by Callison—

BLUM: --The winter term, but then it was also—

MEREDITH: --It did. I remember when it started they were saying “okay we're going to have a four-one-four and that we'll call it the winter term” and for Callison the winter term was not doing regular activities, what we're going to do is concentrate exclusively on getting ready for what's going on in India and how to relate to this ---and then it evolved into the whole campus getting into it. Raymond was doing it and so you had a month and you could take whatever course you wanted—

BLUM: Concentrate on one particular topic. You could go to London and study Dickens, you could go to Spain and study Hemingway in Spain, they did that. Sy Kahn took a drama troop to Europe, to Austria, Vienna. I mean all of this kind of stuff was going on, wow, it was really—I'm using one of those words you used back then, wow! Well, it was sort of an interesting spinoff. I mean you brought in so many innovations in the chapel program. That was related also to innovations in part of coming out of Callison College, which you were involved in and then under the curricular reform at COP a number of these elements—certain degree was also integrated there.

MEREDITH: It's said that the letter "I", the "I" when you say "I am," that the "I" is the most slanderous noun in all of the dictionary. It's just "I" and that became the key vowel for this time. You know they used to say the Callison was set up with five "I's"—I don't remember all of them—Independent study, Interdisciplinary, and International and all of this stuff, imaginative, innovative, you name it. All the "I's". I use to say also, it should be "incomplete" because a lot of students never finished their projects and you would wait and wait and two years later they are coming in with it—but, well, it was a part of that time. And I and I also—the integrative part of it. The integrative, and innovative, and imaginative, what not? Why shouldn't a college campus be the most exciting place you can imagine? I mean it should be a real adventure and I think it was here. Maybe too adventurous and maybe it couldn't last—sort of like a love affair, you know—[actually you may not know!]. When you have all of these marvelous sparks flying and you think it's going to last this way for fifty year [laughs]

BLUM: Well, certainly I think that we discovered that in the following decade in the seventies.

MEREDITH: Yes, yes.

BLUM: You know when there, was these societal changes in the attitude towards education and what parents and students were expecting from their college.

MEREDITH: Well that's part of it.

BLUM: Well, that led to some extent, I suppose a reaction and sometimes even a backlash. You know it eventually kills the experimental college.

MEREDITH: Well, most of the experimental colleges died. Around the country they just sprang up like a yard full of them and then all of a sudden they are wilting because they have to have a root—a taproot somewhere into the classic educational tradition in order to survive.

BLUM: Well, that and they also need—I think, at least my conclusion, they need a strong economic base—

MEREDITH: Okay, now we are getting down the realities.

BLUM: --And this institution, we never have it.

MEREDITH: Well, the—we had a lot of problems there that we were all aware of, but one of them was the athletic program was draining money—it was really draining quite a bit of money, we simply couldn't afford it and every year they investigated it and every year they continued it until finally—what in 1996 or something when the president finally said enough is enough. Football was gone, but that was a problem and then it was difficult to sell economically—an avant-garde -- clearly left-oriented programs—at least in the valley, I mean people in the grape growers and out here in the valley looking in and saying “wait a minute, I'm not sure we want to give money to all of these experiments. We want English, history, math, you name it and graduate them the way we have always graduated people”. So it was difficult. I think when Burns died, which was 1971. When Burns died I think the dream of the cluster colleges simply died with him—

BLUM: He was certainly the protecting hand because he was the creator—

MEREDITH: --He created it and he went out and got money for it. Then when McCaffrey came in he had his own strengths, but he

was really much more—he was a fantastic Rotarian. He was international president of Rotary and so forth. And he had that kind of vision of how things ought to be set up in a college and I don't think he ever really understood what the clusters were trying to do—and given his education and background why should he? But anyway the money dried up--- and you're right.

BLUM: And especially the student enrollment dropped.

MEREDITH: When you have to work those things. If you—you have to understand why people should be excited about the clusters and go out and get them and I think that was failure of some of us internally. We simply didn't—we didn't have the continuity of leadership in Callison to keep it going. We turned over provosts, like three in four years. It was just incredible-- and we sent people to India and some of them---- we never heard of them again [laughs]. Wait a minute where did they go? We even had an overseas director who was consulting an astrologer in India to try and figure which way the programs should to go. And I said—he was before his time and if he'd come back he would become president of the United States. Anyway, that was part of it.

BLUM: Well, let's see we talked a little bit about students and elaborated on the related matters—what was your assessment of the faculty here when you came here?

MEREDITH: Well, again it's like so many different colleges. It's not as if you say University of the Pacific and you mean one place, but you don't. You've got all of this old time faculty that's really unhappy about the clusters ----that take it as an insult that they would even consider to have these people here and consider them elite and us not so elite, what is this? We are just as good as they are. So you had that conflict going on, you had the split in the political leanings of people, those that were for the war, against the war, support the government that sort of thing, and what in world

is going on in Vietnam anyway? So you had that split. I remember we had a campus day, one of those informed days. All of the classes dismissed and everybody came out and you had speakers from the state department and people like Jerry Hewitt were speaking about what happened at Kent State.. Jerry was a cluster man but also a political science and philosophy professor in COP. So there was that. You had the split in even the religious studies department. There were some who were interested in the avant-garde movements in Theology. Tom Ambrogi certainly was. Now the chair of the department was a really good scholar, but certainly not interested in the radical approach to theology. So we had those splits. Raymond—I was never quite sure how Raymond fit well with the Callison group in terms of faculty. Or either with COP. I know there was some respect that seemed to carry over—you, George, had great relations with them in the area of history. But, I don't know how well the clusters helped the university community. It seemed to me that there was a lot of jealousy. Not during Callison and Raymond so much, but between Raymond and COP, College of Pacific. I know the jealousy and enmity was addressed by the former provost, the one who had founded the college, Bryan Martin. He came back years later and apologized for what he had done in terms of setting up the culture of difference between Raymond and COP. Setting apart Raymond from the rest of the university-- almost like it was a different universe. And in many ways it was—the curricular and social barriers were a part of it. As for the Callison faculty, I think melded too easily with the Callison student body. They felt themselves—we felt ourselves---as part of each other in such a way that we weren't really mentors in some way. Not separate, but different. It's a different idea of relationship and produced a lot of intimate interaction. Some of it was good and some of it I think was unproductive—even a dangerous kind of thing. You could see it—there was a historian there at Callison you must have known—

BLUM: Van Alstyne

MEREDITH: No, Van Alstyne was the older one, but the younger one—the name will come—well anyway that's okay. That's the problem with interviewing the Emeriti. They say wait a minute--- that neuron missed its little opening there and it's going off somewhere and it's kind of racing around in my brain thinking "where is the rest of me?" [laughs] But anyway, I remember one day—he liked traditional education and he felt that the teacher ought to lecture and the class ought to take notes. That's how he felt about it.

BLUM: You're not thinking of Humphreys?

MEREDITH: No, I'm not thinking of Humphreys. No I don't think he did. This professor did and I remember one day walking down the hall and he was lecturing, he was behind the lectern there and had one student out in front of him, one student and he was lecturing away and the student was taking notes. It was just the two of them in the room. [laughs]

BLUM: Ah, Goldstein

MEREDITH: Goldstein! Morton Goldstein. See there, you get enough Emeriti together and the name will finally come. I mean you gotta get more brain cells working, you know? Okay. Morton Goldstein that was it. Anyway—

BLUM: Well he was sort of a little bit of an oddball, all around.

MEREDITH: Well, a lot of people thought we specialized in oddballs in the cluster and we didn't really.

BLUM: Well, at the same time however, he also had—didn't really know him well-- some conversations in which he was also pretty hardheaded.

MEREDITH: Okay, well—

BLUM: And that didn't just quite fit because you had to be more flexible.

MEREDITH: Well, I thought—Goldstein was also in the history department. He thought the history department was really pretty good, very good. And the English department was strong—

BLUM: Well both of those departments—

MEREDITH: They were strong. And I—you know all of those folks Charles Clerc and the rest, they were really, really first rate. Arlen Hansen was brought it and he was just awfully good. I was—when Sy Kahn took over the drama department it was about '67 --something like that—'68 actually. Drama became very strong academically. His view of course was that the college theatre tradition ought to be the one to help educate, so you don't necessarily have a play just to fax it in. You want to work through it and see why this particular play was strong in its time, its culture,--- and how it's structured. So I always felt that was good. The choir—the music in the conservatory--- that was in flux when I came here. Pacific had just changed deans in the conservatory and there was a lot of unrest concerning what was happening. And then they change conductors and they brought in Dehning to conduct the a cappella choir and Bodley was a loved figure. He was—but I don't think he was anywhere near of the capabilities of Dehning. Dehning was superb.

BLUM: [voice is low; hard to understand]

MEREDITH: Well---- then Dehning had stayed here for many years and left for the University of Southern California and has since become in international circles the outstanding collegiate conductor around. So, it's clear how good he was. We had these real pockets of excellence coming along. But then there was a huge conflict coming up again between the professional schools and the humanities---- and there is always a fight--- and it's still a fight--- to this very minute about how we are supporting the humanities. The parents ask something like—what are you doing majoring in English? What the hell are you going to do with an English degree? You're majoring in what? History? Are you kidding? What are you going to do with that? You ought to make history and not major in it. Make money. Do something. Let's go. Anyway, there's that. I never sensed that in a place like Albion. There was no question why Albion existed. It was there to insist on the total education of the student. English was just as important as biology, or chemistry as history. Philosophy worked together physics. You name it and it must be integrated. That's just the way it was. When you begin to isolate disciplines the education doesn't go deep enough.

BLUM: Alright. Do you have any comments about the administration?

MEREDITH: [laughs] Well, what comments? They are so different—I mean—Burns was really an interesting man. He was—he never impressed me as someone academic. He just didn't. He hired academics. He liked action. He was like a—he was a salesman of types. But he wanted the campus alive. He was alive and he wanted it alive, so clusters were just great to him. And he liked the fact that the chapel was alive. He liked that. As long as he didn't get blamed for it [laughs]. He didn't like that too much. So Burns was different—he protected action. But his economic policy—we use to call it a the sort of funeral policy---or maybe a scavenger plan. The development staff were the vultures

that would flap in and sit on the fence and wait for carrion to arrive. Well, he use to go out and he would look over at the money field and he would see people that were fading fast but had some resources. Then he would get those people with lucrative insurance policies to promise that when they died they would give all this policy money to Pacific ---and he would talk to all these just plain folks and it was a very personal thing—and quite charming-- and they would give him the farm and the grape crop-- and they supported things. We had theatre up at Columbia that was a growing affair and we had campus out there on the coast—some biology station in the bay area--a marine station. We had this, we had that. We opened the Pharmacy and we opened McGeorge School of Law and I don't know where he he got all his energy—he just said let's go. We used to joke that he was opening a school for lumberjacks in Humboldt County. So he was--he was fun to be with, you know. And he did support academic freedom.

BLUM: Oh he was superb.

MEREDITH: When the Leary thing broke and the volcano started spilling over he realized this is what a campus is all about and that if we can't listen to these kinds of people then we shouldn't be in business. Then McCaffrey came in and McCaffrey has such a different style. It was very—in some sense it was gracious, but it was also executive, top-down, everything in its place, management style. He was organized. And that had a certain appeal but I never felt that it moved forward. The clusters had diminished under his regime. There were rumblings—he was given a vote of no confidence by the faculty at one point which devastated him. He was—personally to me he was just superb. I give him an awful lot of credit for helping my family in terms of international experiences. He—when we went on sabbatical in 1983 he wrote letters to leading Rotarians all over Greece, Egypt, and Israel and

those letters and every time the leaders opened up his letters [Tape 1, Side A ends]

Tape 1, Side B

MEREDITH: Where were we? Were we in Greece?

BLUM: Yes, you were international [ships?]

MEREDITH: McCaffrey did this. He remembered names, he wrote letters to everybody, I mean he ran a tight ship is what I am saying and when you ask him to do something he did it. There was no loose ends—everything was in order. And when he was at Berkeley, he was a Phi Beta Kappa and all those kinds of things, so he was intelligent—but in his own conservative style. I am saying, personally he opened doors. I remember one he opened—he gave a letter to the governor of Rotary in Greece and the next thing I knew I was in the home of Prevelakis. Prevelakis was the most inaccessible and most respected man of letters in all of Greece. I mean people would die to see him. And I was there in his study with his collection of paintings—one of his classical collection-- an original from El Greco hanging behind his desk-- and he was showing me the original manuscript for The Odyssey: a Modern Sequel by Nikos Kazantzakis-- the longest handwritten manuscript in western literature. And never before had the manuscript been brought out and photographed. It was just incredible and all of this was due to McCaffrey. When we had a Fulbright in Austria, he not only stood behind us with recommendations but he visited in Vienna at an international conference on education.. We came in from Graz and listened to his address to the conference there and shared our experiences with Austrian education. So he was internationally famous and did some really fine things on the campus for selected faculty, but Pacific as a university did not advance under his leadership. Now, DeRosa—and then—

BLUM: Of course we have the interlude—

MEREDITH: Well, he have an interlude not to be mentioned, but that was—I just don't understand. I don't even want to talk about that. But that's over, I never understood that point in our history. Never.

BLUM: Especially since the [interviewer spoke really low, could not understand what was said]

MEREDITH: Well, that's—I know that. Well, anyway, DeRosa seemed to be a strikingly appropriate and wonderful appointment. I don't know how you feel about that, but I think he has been able to do what no one else has ever done---- actually certain that no one did it. McCaffrey didn't do it, even Burns didn't do it. He has put the university on proper financial footing and it is almost a miracle. It is almost a miracle what he has done ---and people trust him, they like him, and they trust him and he has transformed our university. He has been warm, judicious, and visionary--- and he has done it as the—I think—actually I use to say he was the first Ph.D, the first true academic that was ever president for Pacific [laughs]. We'll leave that point aside. But DeRosa was. He was a psychologist, Ph.D, and then administrator. I think he has done a really superb job.

BLUM: Do you have any comments about academic vice-presidents or deans? Many came and went.

MEREDITH: They really did, but gosh—they went on to be college presidents, a lot of them. There was the man that was here before I was, you might know him—

BLUM: Sam Meyer.

MEREDITH:--Sam Meyer went to Ohio Northern as president.

BLUM: [interviewer spoke too low to understand what was said]

MEREDITH: Oh you mean after Meyers? The successor --Wally Graves--went to Indiana Wesleyan as president. Well, anyway—they were here for a short time. Bevan was here for a short time—

BLUM: He was here really just three years. He never became president.

MEREDITH: No he didn't, he never did.

BLUM: He did not want to become president, I understand.

MEREDITH: I don't know what happened there—

BLUM: He moved academically.

MEREDITH: Then we had a man came over from the School of Education, came over. Jarvis—I had good personal relations with him. I guess a lot of people did. I thought his academic credentials were weak. That's what I thought, but I'm suspicious about certain doctoral programs.—I guess anyway he didn't stay long. And Alistair McCrone, we had McCrone. McCrone who went to become president at Humboldt and stayed for many years—I don't know he might still be there. [The old Burns rumor might be true!]

BLUM: I think I might have heard he retired.

MEREDITH: Yeah, but he stayed the whole time from there and even taught a course in—

BLUM: Geology.

MEREDITH: --Geology, at Humboldt, every year.

BLUM: Then there was one person from the midst of the faculty, Clifford Hand.

MEREDITH: Clifford was an interesting case. He had been at the COP English department—and Clifford understood education-- I think he was brilliant. I think Clifford did some really good things. I don't know about the demise of the clusters, how well he handled that.

BLUM: Well, I guess it depends, you know—who you are talking to I suppose. But, at least from my perspective I thought he had done rather well indeed.

MEREDITH: Well, we had—

BLUM: And by the way, I think at that time we still gave McCaffrey all of the credit for saving at least most of the cluster colleges.

MEREDITH: Well, he did that and he also made the switch with Otis Shao.[Shao switched with Reuben Smith—Graduate School for Callison]

BLUM: Yes, Otis Shao.

MEREDITH: So, Reuben switched out of the cluster and into the dean of education in graduate school and Otis went the other way. That worked well for a while for Otis and then he left for Occidental College--- but then Smith stayed on and on. He was really elegant. I really liked Reuben, he helped us in a lot of ways. That was some pretty good leadership there but ---I don't know-- the relationship with the COP dean always seemed very strange.

BLUM: COP was reflected basically on certain kind of attitudinal orientation and the administrator, I think to some extent reflected this kind of institutions.

MEREDITH: Well they put that—there is no College of the Pacific now right? The way it was?

BLUM: Well, it's bit of a strange kind of situation, but College of the Pacific has always had a somewhat difficult situation. Given the competition of the professional schools and clusters and then especially when it came to trying to establish some kind of identity, authenticity, and the dean was always in a difficult position trying to match the wits of the professional deans and he was always outnumbered when it came to numbers.

MEREDITH: And he didn't have the power. You know I remember when Cliff was in charge as Interim President, he was the one going through the business about Raymond and Callison that they have to be amalgamated, that's when they came together and called us Ray-Cal or something. I told you it sounded like a stock market quotation. Ray-Cal stock is up this week and down the next week [mostly down]. McCaffrey returned to see the demise of it all. They finally had the burial in 1982 with a ritual in Callison Lodge. I guess Covell lingered on for a while because it seemed to be an entity all to itself.

BLUM: Yeah, Ray-Cal sort of died in '80 and Covell lasted two more years.

MEREDITH: I think the last commencement they had was '82.

BLUM: Oh really, it was still—

MEREDITH: '82 was the last commencement because that's when I moved from—my office was over in the old Callison lodge and in '82 I moved to—

BLUM: Did you actually transfer to the religious studies department before that, in 1980 when Ray-Cal ended?

MEREDITH: I didn't. I didn't transfer in '80. I don't think so. Maybe you know more about my history than I do.

BLUM: I guess I am just in part reflecting my own experience because I know the Raymond faculty—so I remember in 1980 and either they were transferred into departments or they left under some kind of terminal arrangement. I know this is true of two of my colleagues—my Raymond colleagues. The others had already left at the time in '77.

MEREDITH: I see what you mean. There had to be a technical arrangement for those students who had come in on the last years. They were the last ones at their graduation in '82. And that was it, there was no more after that. But you are right, the major break up was earlier and that shotgun wedding was just not going to work. Anyway, it was two different things being done by—Raymond was doing one thing and Callison doing another. Now Callison did sort of get a semi-resurrection in the School for International studies.

BLUM: Exactly, I was going to come to that.

MEREDITH: That's the resurrection.

BLUM: It was McCaffrey's.

MEREDITH: It had to be a pretty sly resurrection because if a lot of the faculty members got wind of the Callison connection [laughs]--they weren't exactly going to worship that but it was—

the Callison faculty that did it. Bruce LeBrack, Cort Smith, Jerry Hewitt. Cort Smith—

BLUM: Was really the leader.

MEREDITH: Designed it, was the leader of it and McCaffrey would not appoint him. He would not.

BLUM: And it was not for the good of the college.

MEREDITH: And that was a mistake, I think.

BLUM: We had an interim dean of sorts.

MEREDITH: Interim dean, we had several deans that came and went. And now they've got a virtually perfect dean—nobody is perfect I guess, but she's close. She is really—Margee Ensign has done a magnificent job and provost Gilbertson really appreciates what she has done and the relationship she has set up with Rwanda and that country. That country has become a model for creating a new country after a Holocaust and it will be featured this fall in a PBS special broadcast, and hour broadcast of what's happening in Rwanda ---and Margee Ensign has written a script for it and a book as well. They brought the president of Rwanda here for an honorary degree, depth discussions of nation building, and all the rest of it. Also, founding and presiding over the Dave Brubeck Institute, that's also been done under DeRosa's guidance and that's a wonderful thing that they have set up. It is really good. So, a lot of exciting things, but that's the place that Callison went. When Callison died, that's where it went [laughs]. It's like when the sixties died it went to Santa Cruz [laughs]. You can still find it over there if you go, oh there it is. But that's also true of Raymond. This core at COP program where every freshman, sophomore, and senior have to take these integrative courses--- people say that's

what Raymond use to be, but you would know better than I if that would be so.

BLUM: Well, there are remnants of it.

MEREDITH: Remnants of Raymond, that's what we'll call it.

BLUM: Yes.

MEREDITH: I don't know the official title, I forgot the official title but we'll call it remnants of Raymond. But Herb Reinelt was a part of it, some of the philosophy department—in fact a lot of philosophy department in that.

BLUM: Well, Herb Reinelt was one COP faculty member who from the very start had a very close relationship with Raymond college.

MEREDITH: Yes he did. And he had a very friendly relationship with Callison. He did.

BLUM: Herb you know, he is a very good mind, very well educated, and it's—you hate to even say it, but he is truly a good person.

MEREDITH: He is like the good, the true, the beautiful, the triumphant of Greece. Well he's not beautiful [laughs], but he is true and good. George, not all of us can be beautiful right?

BLUM: Right. And he did play to my mind, a critical role, it took someone like Herb, when the university was in transition from the old model of reagents to the new model under DeRosa. When DeRosa became president-- [interviewer spoke too low to understand what was said].

MEREDITH: I think Monagan was the very key to that.

BLUM: And it was very helpful at that time to have Herb Reinelt as the leader of the faculty. [interviewer spoke to low to understand what was said]

MEREDITH: Well, I know that the faculty was at odds with Bob Eberhardt and walked out on him—at graduation I was on sabbatical--- I just came in just to kind of see in the back what was going on at graduation and here comes Dale McNeal getting an award for an outstanding professor, then leads the walkout.

BLUM: Yeah I was present for that, I think I was on leave. But, I sure heard about it.

MEREDITH: Yao, Dr. Yao, the famous Chinese filmmaker and philosopher taught at Callison and Dr. Yao's daughter now is the vice-president of a bank, a world bank or something and she was giving the address and [laughs] and she just shocked—it is rude--so un-Asian to walk out of a thing like that. But the faculty were really unhappy about the way the regents treated McCargo—a lot of people felt it was a dictatorship almost. What he wants he gets. And that sort of thing. But of course, Bob Eberhardt deserved a little more from the faculty then what he got because he—Eberhardt supported the university unconditionally at a time when they were about to go under. Burns leaned on him. He said Bob, was true blue [orange and black], loyal all the way through. I mean Eberhardt was the one who supplied the money and made the arrangements to keep us solvent and open in crisis. Completely loyal to the university ---and he did love football. He wanted to save that but it just went against him on that.

BLUM: Yeah. It was also, sort of almost a historical accident that he died.

MEREDITH: Yeah. Well, so anyway, now I think the regents are more diverse. I don't what—I don't sit in on regents, so I don't know.

BLUM: Some of us who are retired are more removed than others, but one doesn't hear that much. Except, you have these public meetings here and there. [interviewer spoke too low to understand what was said]

MEREDITH: Well, she is so ebullient and warm. Did you know that she danced in the chapel when I was dean of the chapel? She danced in a Grecian outfit. And to this day one of her highlights of her educational career she was dancing in the Grecian outfit. I was trying to think—it was one of the festivals we set up, I don't know, but she was throwing baskets of flowers around--- but anyway she did that. Every time she sees me she reminds me of that occasion. It is really funny. That's the kind of warmth we need and intelligence and long time support of the university.

BLUM: Do you have any brief comments about the staff at the university?

MEREDITH: The staff?

BLUM: Yes.

MEREDITH: Oh gosh, I don't know. No. We've had so many different staff members in religious studies and all of the clusters. I mean we had—oh my goodness, they came and they went. Lilly Tanji was the one I knew the best. She was there forever. And if there was a staff member in Callison from '70 all the way to the end, Lilly Tanji was the one. You know I was interim dean for the international programs for a while and of course she had helped me along with that. Still a good friend to this very day. When she retired and we gave her a big party and we announced that she was

probably the only Japanese, Jewish mother in existence. She just took care of everybody. To this day, to this very hour, if you go see her, she does not believe that there is any such thing as a gay person. She just doesn't believe it. She has nothing against gays, she just doesn't believe there are any. It's just one of those things.

BLUM: Even though she had some of those in her midst.

MEREDITH: Especially [laughs]. It was just—oh my goodness. It's okay. Anyway, she really is a dear person. Reminds me I have to go see her. Betty Beckler, I would mention. If I had to mention one staff person who really was important in my life at this university, it would be Betty Beckler. She was the dean's secretary at the conservatory when I came. But when the new dean came in he didn't want anybody connected and she was the wife of a conservatory composition professor. So she had to look for a job. I came in as dean of the chapel, and the dean of the chapel secretary [Florence Wilder] went with Larry Jackson to Callison. So there I was with no secretary. I never had a secretary to tell you the truth. I never—I didn't have a secretary. I was there with Betty and said "yeah sure, why don't you work here—let's do it, cause I don't know anything about it and you know everything about it, let's go". So, she came over for those four years that I was the dean, she was my secretary and she was so intelligent and I have got to tell you she loved Bach. And Beethoven too. Anyway, Betty was supportive. She really made it possible, to tell you the truth, to do that job. And she went briefly to Callison at the chapel when I moved, but only for semester—then she went off on some other thing and finally went to work for a lawyer in town, that sort of thing [Darrell Glahn]. But Betty is still here in town and I still think about all of those years when she really helped so much. And she was efficient and intelligent and knew exactly what we ought to do.

BLUM: Well, one thing that perhaps you may want to comment on before we talk last about your assessment is of the relationship between the university and the community, about the curricular changes that you were connected with.

MEREDITH: Well, I have had many I don't know. I was involved in the Callison curricular changes all the time. We all were. We discussed those night and day, what we were going to do—so that was another thing. All related to our college in Asia, the first four years of course in Bangalore and then rest of the time in Japan. And I also was a scholar in residence in Japan, learning what was going on and trying to help a little bit. So, there was that. As far as the curriculum here, I was involved in beginning that religion and modern culture class. I thought that the chapel ought to be integrated completely with the curriculum and then I was—when I came back from Japan I introduced the Japanese culture and religion course into the curriculum here. And then in relation to religion and modern culture class, since I was no longer in chapel, we created a class called Religion of the body. This was a course that I taught for sixteen years which pulled in many of the kind of dimensions and interests that would have been relevant to a larger audience in the chapel, but now confined to a class. This approach would take the body with all seriousness--- instead of being an ethereal, spiritual kind of connection with religion. When you think of Christianity the key doctrine is the incarnation. What does it mean? What does it really mean to have a body? Obviously the Christians took it seriously and didn't even know what to do with it. They wouldn't even let Jesus stay dead. I mean...[laughs] ...there is a body of Christ, what is this—an eternal incarnation?? So we did many things educationally related to culture as the form of religion. We related to the women's center here in town. In fact, I knew all of the people well who founded the women center. And in the Religion of the Body course we talked about the different concepts of space. We talked about the psychology of space and we'd have the psychology department over and discuss

the difference between masculine space and feminine space. And these visitors helped us understand what those differences were-- especially the women visitors. They would talk about how differently they saw this community and their role in it. Medical Doctors were guests and they discussed the body in terms of healing; the difference between modern medical procedures and faith healing. I'd have orthopedic surgeons like Joe Serra talk about Norman Cousins' book, *Anatomy of an Illness*. We had sessions about art. We had athletic space. How do athletes see their own bodies? And is there a difference in the way athletes see the world. How do we define sport? What is a game? I mean really—we had all doors open and I mean we had some of the great athletes walk through them. Don Meredith came by several evenings, and he was really fun. Well---- sports caster and the Dallas Cowboy quarterback, naturally he would come over—Meredith's always stick together.

BLUM: No relation, huh?

MEREDITH: No--- but he was a groomsman at our wedding. I know him very well. I know right now he is not very well. He just had a stroke and while he's recovered from it he doesn't drive anymore and doesn't walk as well as he wants to, not like the old days when he was a great athlete. I talked to him on the phone recently and I said "how are you?" He said—he calls me brother just because everybody thinks we're brothers—"well brother I have CRS syndrome." I said "well what is that?" He said "can't remember sh—"[laughs]. I said "I don't think you're the only one who's got that." That thing runs in the family. But anyway--- some really amazing things went on in that class over the years. I even had Maya Angelou's mother come to class one time, several times really, talking about her experiences with Maya Angelou and what happened in that relationship. What it's like to grow up in little Stamps, Arkansas, and all of the things that went down there, and of the times with the family in San Francisco. So, each class

was all different with a variety of body interpretations.—We even investigated the world of sex-- since it was religion of the body. And we had some amazing sessions with that. Guests came in from San Francisco representing the rather normal sexual odyssey and then others stunned us with the connection between SM and religion. It just amazed everyone. They started reading the hymns and stuff from the bible about suffering and how God tests you and does this to you and that to you and through this testing you become stronger and all that kind of stuff. And the theology just reads like a kind of SM manual, some of it anyway. It was remarkable. And I will never forget Layne Winklebleck [Kat Sunlove's consort], saying, "Doctor, you know I think we're more spiritual than you are." I said "Well you may be right—but I still don't know why pain is pleasure." Anyway, there it ---it was called "Religion of the body" and that's a sixteen year run for that course and there was nothing like it on the campus as any student would tell you that lived through a semester.

BLUM: Let's see, you first offered some of it through Callison or—

MEREDITH: Religion of the body?

BLUM: --yeah.

MEREDITH: No, it was always—it started—well when Callison closed I had already begun to offer it. Before I left Callison I was already teaching courses—all of us were teaching courses-- in College of the Pacific, but that's how it began. In fact in the original course that I had, it was in Callison. One of the enrollees—well two of them one of them were Glenna Goranson and the other was Pete Carroll. Well they got married at the end of the course. Part of it really. They wanted me to marry them as part of the fulfillment of the meaning of the course. It was their way of saying we understand this. We'll prepare a picnic in

the park —just you and Mrs. Meredith, Glenna's sister and us. We'll eat, drink, talk about life journeys. When you think the time is right pronounce us Mr. and Mrs. Pete Carroll.

Well as you may or may not know, Pete Carroll is now the head football coach of the University of Southern California Trojans and the most famous college coach in America .. Two time national champion and all the kind of stuff and he has never forgotten this course. He is long since a graduate of UOP but when he got to Southern Cal--I had followed his career as a professional coach-- he called me up and said "I want you to go with you to Notre Dame-- we are playing Notre Dame in South Bend in October." I said "oh, oh, okay." He said "I want you to talk to the team." About what? Anyway, he wanted me to talk to the team. Glen Albaugh was also to be there with him--- Glen is very close friend of his and so was the late Bill Walsh, who by the way had his funeral today. Anyway, Peter—we were all there and here are all these football players out there and it is me talking up there before the Notre Dame game. Half hour of riff on I don't know what and then the next day he took us all out—team and all!-- to the campus before we played. He wanted the team to experience the essence of Notre Dame. Their grotto is the heart of the campus and it is replica of a French Lourdes shrine. So we went over there and then this whole team that gets out of the bus and descends on this shrine in their sweats, these huge guys all around. And here are the people down on this grotto and they are lighting candles and praying and they all turn around----- and there is this football team there and Pete pulls me up on a rock and asks me to talk to the team about why this place is sacred. It was so strange that it made the Southern California papers --- the Los Angeles Times ran a notice on this odd new way to get a team ready to play Notre Dame [laughs]--- his preacher getting up on rock at this grotto and talking to the team. People asked me about it and I tell them that it was my sermon on the Rockne. Anyway—well--- the next year I went to the Notre Dame game in Los Angeles and the

quarterback of the team was there and recognized me when I came in ---he said “Aren’t you that guy that came in and talked to us last year?” I said “Yeah” and he said “You know we lost that game?” And I replied “Well that may be true, but I didn’t throw any of those interceptions.”

BLUM: Well we have just a few more minutes unless you would like to continue.

MEREDITH: No, I’m just rattling on. No telling—I hope nobody listens to this [laughs].

BLUM: Do you have any reaction on the topic of—just a quick reaction of university relations with the community?

MEREDITH: You know I don’t have much of a handle on that. I assume, at first, there was a real distinction. I mean the university was here and the community was out there and never the two were mixed, but during the revolution I remember that a new program was born—Burns became very alarmed at the student revolution and he really thought there could be one on the campus here and he wanted to do something preemptive like have a relationship between the college and the community—so that’s when he set up this idea about scholarships.

BLUM: Yeah, community involvement.

MEREDITH: The CIP program where they could come in-- tuition free---up to 200. To relieve the tension. That’s why he set that up at that time. And then the Y program became very, very involved in the community --and Callison college had a special program in which they worked in the community, every student had to work in the community. I don’t know about Raymond but I know Callison did and Stan Croker [an Australian sociologist] was brought. He was in the religious studies department getting his

masters, and he was in charge of setting that program up in the community. So there was emphasis on community work. We used to have a program where students went out and spoke in the churches [sponsored by the Methodist Student Movement] but that didn't happen all that much, at least not while I was at the Chapel me. But relations improved with Cedric Dempsey here as Athletic Director. He got the community really involved with the Pacific Athletic Foundation, all of the community, all over the area. Potential contributors attended functions, learning about the university's athletic and academic program and Dempsey was very strong about combining the two. Of course he went on to be president of the NCAA. Tried to take the message {combining academics and athletics seriously} there. It is a very hard message to get across, but that was his vision here. He was part of that community activity-- very , very strong. Of course there was Rotary stuff with McCaffrey and the other staff members who belonged to the service clubs around here--- movers and shakers. The women's center had a lot of support here---- so there was a lot of things that really worked for the university. The community and the university---it's very friendly now, I would think—though there must be some perception that our campus is an elite place. It is a beautiful campus--it is a lot more beautiful than many other places in town. It doesn't look a lot like south Stockton, the campus. But, I think the thrust over years has been to overcome that perception gap. The Clusters were part of the effort—of course you want to do that.

BLUM: Well, I think with the emphasis on student internships—

MEREDITH: Internships would do it. Colliver did. When Dr. Colliver was here, he related very well with the Chinese community ----and this is the 50th year of the Co[liver lectures by the way--- and they are going to celebrate that with Maxine Hong Kingston [world famous Stockton writer] here to speak--- and

Skipper Lee's wife [a former student of Dr. Colliver's] is involved in it. It gives us a way of working with the community.

BLUM: Well, I think we are coming pretty much to the end unless you would like to add some things.

MEREDITH: No, I don't think so--- no one wants to hear anymore [laughs].

BLUM: I think this has been an informative experience. It should add to the archival material that we have here. So thank you very much.

MEREDITH: Well, you are certainly welcome. It has been a real adventure being here.

[Tape stops; end of interview]